



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION
1000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

APR 13 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

Subj: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY POLICY GUIDANCE ON CONTINUOUS
LEARNING FOR THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

Ref: (a) USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning of 15 December 98
(b) DACM letter on Continuing Acquisition Education and Training of 24 Sep 95
(c) SECNAVINST 5300.36 of 31 May 95

Encl: (1) Guidelines for Crediting Continuous Learning Activities

It is essential that our acquisition workforce members have the necessary skills to perform their jobs in an exceptional manner. To that end, it is imperative that they are given the opportunity to keep those skills current and that they stay abreast of the latest reforms and trends in acquisition. The continuous learning program described below adds a new dimension to the existing Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Acquisition Workforce Program by building on career-field certification standards and emphasizing the need for career-long learning.

Reference (a) describes the USD(A&T) policy on continuous learning for the acquisition workforce. This letter issues policy guidance for implementation of reference (a) within the Department of the Navy, effective immediately. Further, the Interim Policy on Continuing Acquisition Education and Training that was implemented by reference (b) is hereby cancelled. Addressees are to implement reference (a) within their organizations in accordance with the guidelines established by this letter.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING (CL) POLICY: Civilian and military personnel in designated DAWIA billets shall participate in continuous learning activities that augment the minimum education, training and experience standards established for certification purposes for their career field and for specific acquisition assignments.

APPLICABILITY: All military and civilian employees in designated DAWIA billets shall annually assess their needs for training, education and developmental experiences and, jointly with their supervisors, prepare a plan to: a) make progress toward completing their certification requirements or, if they have met the certification requirements of their billet, b) meet the continuous learning standard (See **Continuous Learning Standard** below). Employees are required to meet the certification requirements of their position within 18 months after entry into the position, or get a waiver in accordance with reference (c). Addressees are responsible for ensuring that completion of certification requirements takes precedence over participation in other CL activities.

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CONTINUOUS LEARNING STANDARD: DAWIA personnel who have met the certification requirements for the positions they encumber shall earn a minimum of 80 “continuous learning points” every two years, Enclosure (1) highlights the types of activities that earn points, including activities related to functional and technical training, (including training to achieve higher levels of certification), leadership training, academic courses, experiential and developmental assignments and professional activities. As part of their annual planning for career development, supervisors and employees shall use enclosure (1) as an aid in establishing the number of points to be credited for specific activities. Supervisors shall adhere to the restrictions and limitations described in reference (a) when establishing points for specific activities. Points will not be awarded to employees who do not meet the certification requirements of their position.

TIMEFRAMES FOR ATTAINING THE CONTINUOUS LEARNING

STANDARD: Employees who were certified to the level required by their position as of 1 October 1998, must earn 80 CL points by 30 September, 2000. Employees who were not certified to the level required by their position as of 1 October 1998 must earn 80 continuous learning points within 2 years after the date they became/become certified. At their discretion, supervisors may grant a 3 month “grace” period for earning the required points. Further time extensions should be extremely rare, and require a waiver (See **Waivers** below).

CONTINUOUS LEARNING CERTIFICATION: Until an automated system is in place to issue continuous learning certificates at the Department of the Navy level, (see **Tracking** below), supervisors are authorized to issue written documentation of their employee’s attainment of the CL standard. The written CL certification will be valid for two years from the date of issue, during which time the employee shall continue to participate in CL activities in order to maintain his/her CL certification. At their discretion, supervisors may grant a three month “grace” period beyond the deadline. Employees who fail to meet the requirement within the allotted time will lose their CL certification until they earn the required points. In exceptional cases, waivers may be granted. (See **Waivers** below).

INCENTIVES: Addressees should use attainment of the CL standard as one of the evaluation factors to be considered: a) when selecting employees for advanced development programs such as DLAMP; b) when selecting civilian acquisition employees for assignments and promotions; c) as a career development feature for military officers which could enhance duty performance and increase potential for greater responsibilities; and d) when appraising those elements of supervisory performance that encompass workforce management and development.

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WAIVERS: Supervisors are expected to ensure that their employees have adequate opportunity to participate in CL activities, and that they earn 80 points within timeframes specified above. Understanding that workload may occasionally supercede planned developmental activities, supervisors may grant a three month extension of the specified timeframes. Further time extensions should be extremely rare, and require that a waiver be granted by an individual not lower than one tier above the employee's supervisor, or SES, whichever is lower. The waiver must clearly state that the CL certification requirement will not be waived, and that only a time extension is being granted. The waiver must also establish a new deadline for attaining CL certification.

TRACKING: By the end of FY-99, the Office of the Director, Acquisition Education, Training & Career Development, will prototype a world-wide-web-based system for crediting and recording workforce members' participation in CL activities. When completed, the system will enable the Navy to centrally track CL certification status of the DAWIA workforce. Until the system is ready for Navy-wide implementation, addressees are responsible for tracking workforce members' attainment of CL certification. At a minimum, supervisors and employees must keep a record of the types of CL activities in which the employee participated, the points earned for each activity, the deadline by which the CL certification must be attained, and the date the CL certification was awarded.

REPORTING: On October 15, 1999, and each October 15 thereafter, addressees must provide to the Director, Acquisition Career Management, a separate, stand-alone report on the number of workforce members who were certified as having met the CL standard during the previous fiscal year.

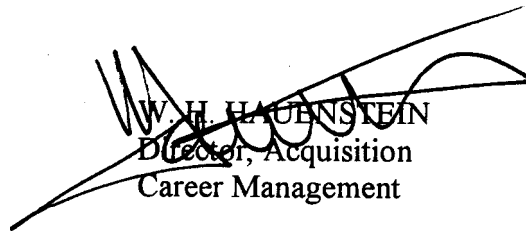
ENHANCED STANDARDS FOR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: Reference (a) establishes enhanced education, training and experience requirements for DAWIA personnel in certain leadership positions. These enhanced standards are effective in 2002, and will be implemented by DON-published guidance prior to that time.

FUNDING: It is incumbent upon each organization to facilitate the continued professional growth and development of their acquisition workforce. Understanding that there are often funding constraints, reference (a) describes numerous activities in which employees can participate at little or no cost, including on-the-job experiential assignments. However, at a minimum, addressees are to continue funding CL activities at the same level at which they provided funding for continuing acquisition education and training activities under reference (b). Navy-wide centralized funding will also be provided to meet certain CL requirements. For example, under the Acquisition Workforce Tuition Assistance Program (AWTAP), the Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) provides funding for academic activities that may earn CL points. The DACM also funds certain command-sponsored training courses associated with

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continuous learning. In addition, within allotted funds, the DACM will allocate centralized funding for attendance at DAU courses taken to earn CL points.

Addressees are requested to give this policy guidance widespread distribution. Your assistance in supporting this important program is appreciated; it will be invaluable in allowing our workforce members to strengthen their professional growth, and stay current with the latest acquisition issues. Questions regarding this policy guidance should be addressed to Ms. Anne Ryan on 703-602-9943.



W. H. HAUENSTEIN
Director, Acquisition
Career Management

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GUIDELINES FOR CREDITING CONTINUOUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ATTACHMENT 1

I. ABOUT THE GUIDELINES: The Guidelines for Crediting Continuous Learning Activities are modeled on the practices of a sample of professional societies representative of the acquisition career fields. Many of these professional societies and associations use a point system to evaluate the qualifications of applicants and certify them as meeting the organization's professional standards for membership. By using a point system, the organization is able to establish a common denominator for crediting and recognizing a variety of disparate activities that members can engage in to maintain their functional or disciplinary proficiency and professionalism. Typical among activities which many professional associations and societies encourage and recognize for membership are participation in training, continuing and advanced education, experience, and professional contributions to the field, such as patents and research papers.

The Guidelines are to be used as an aid by employees and supervisors in arriving at point values for specific continuous learning activities. As it is impossible to develop an all-encompassing list of continuous learning activities and their point values, the Guidelines are intended to provide sufficient examples of creditable activities and a range of point values to assist the supervisor and employee in establishing the points to be awarded in individual circumstances.

II. APPLYING THE GUIDELINES: It is expected that supervisors and acquisition personnel will use the Guidelines and their own professional judgment in arriving at points to be awarded for any activity undertaken to meet the Continuous Learning Standards. In cases where the application of the Guidelines may be unclear, supervisors and employees will want to identify an activity addressed in the guidelines that is most like the activity under discussion to arrive at a point value. While supervisors have the authority to establish points for activities that require interpretation and application of the principles underpinning the guidelines, concerns of employees may be addressed through applicable dispute resolution procedures.

All workforce members shall participate in continuous learning. For workforce members who have not yet met certification standards for the positions they encumber, completing their certification training and undertaking on-the-job experiential assignments that enable them to learn new skills, are the appropriate activities. (See the Career Field Guides for examples of activities appropriate for each career level.) Until certified for the positions they encumber, it is not necessary to award and track continuous learning points or issue Continuous Learning Certificates for these workforce members. However, maintaining records and certifying that the 80 point standard has been met are important for individuals who have been certified for the positions they hold.

Moreover, it should be noted that the 80 point standard is a minimum, rather than a maximum, requirement. Because of the desire to ensure that workforce members stay as current as possible, it is highly recommended that individuals who complete the minimum 80 point requirement in the first year of a two-year cycle, engage, in addition, in some moderate continuous learning activity during the second year of the cycle. Activities to stay current, such as attending a satellite broadcast on acquisition reform, or reviewing audio or video tapes or other instructional material, would be appropriate.

III. CATEGORIES OF CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES: The four categories of creditable activities are *Training, Education, Experience, and Professional Activities*. The suggested point values for the variety of activities that can be undertaken in each category are presented on the chart that follows.

A. Training Category: The Training Category includes *functional*, technical and leadership training taken on-site or by distance learning (described in paragraph 1. below) from private and public higher education institutions, industry, training vendors, professional associations DoD schools, including military education institutions, and other federal training and education institutions. While academic credit is not typically awarded for training courses in some cases the organization providing the training may award Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for successful completion of training. (See the discussion which follows in paragraph 2. below for information on converting CEUs to points.) Applicable subject matter is covered under the Continuous Learning Standards, Section V, Paragraphs A and B, of the foregoing USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning for the Defense Acquisition Workforce, Approving officials shall ensure that offerings are certified by a nationally recognized accrediting organization or professional association.

1. *DISTANCE LEARNING*: Training (and education) courses can be taken by a variety of distance learning methods, including satellite downlink, videotape, Intranet and Internet, CD ROM, and written correspondence. Courses that do not provide academic credit or Continuing Education Units for conversion to points per the Guidelines should be assigned credit points by using the standard of one point per 60 minutes of time devoted to the learning activity. If an Internet course, CD ROM or other computer-based course carries a "running time" estimate, then that estimate should be used to determine the points to be awarded (one point per 60 minutes of "running time").

2. *CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS*. The International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) defines a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) as "10 contact hours (60-minute hours) of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified instruction. instructional hours do not include time involved in coffee breaks, meals, social activities or business and committee meetings." *CEUs are not measures of academic credit*. The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is a member of IACET, a non-profit membership organization of over 650 organizations and individuals involved in continuing education and training. As such, DAU is a certified provider of CEUs. The DAU print and on-line catalogs provide a listing of CEUs for each DAU course. CEUs designated in the DAU catalog for each course should be used as the basis for point conversions for crediting successful completion of a DAU offering. Because the IACET standard is one CEU for every 10 hours of instruction, the conversion value is 10 points for each CEU earned, or the equivalent of one point per hour of instruction. For example, DAU has assigned 3.6 CEUs, the equivalent of 36 hours of instruction, to the course, "CON 301 Executive Contracting." In applying the Guidelines, an individual completing this course would receive 36 points.

B. Education Category: The Education Category encompasses courses taken on-site or by *distance-learning from accredited public and private institutions of higher education that award undergraduate or graduate academic credit, degrees, or CEUs* for successful completion of the course. Applicable subject matter is covered under the Continuous Learning Standards, Section V. Paragraph C. of the foregoing USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning for the

Defense Acquisition Workforce. Degrees attained are creditable only in the year they are earned.

C. Experience Category: The Experience category includes on-the-job experiential assignments and intra and inter-organizational rotations and developmental experiences, both within DOD, other federal agencies, and with industry. Such experiences must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and DoD policies and procedures as outlined in Section V. Paragraph D.2 of the foregoing USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning for the Defense Acquisition Workforce. To insure that on-the-job assignments do not limit participation in other types of learning activities, credit for on-the-job assignments performed at the duty station may only total 40 of the 80 points required in a 2-year period. While supervisors and employees will use their own discretion in arriving at a reasonable point value to be awarded for rotational and developmental assignments, a sliding scale is recommended. For example a 9 to 12 month rotation to another organization may receive the full 80 points; a 6 to 9 month rotation, 60 points; and a 3 to 6 month rotation, 40 points. For a more complete description of experiential and developmental assignments, see the continuous Learning Standards, Section V, Paragraph D of the USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning for the Defense Acquisition Workforce.

D. Professional Activities Category: The Professional Activities Category encompasses activities sponsored by professional societies and associations that enable acquisition professionals to stay current in their functional or technical disciplines or in acquisition reforms, as well as other professional activities unrelated to society participation, such as teaching, lecturing, and speaking at symposia and conferences. Acquisition professionals' participation in professional societies and associations, as well as in activities such as teaching, lecturing, publishing and writing, shall be consistent with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, issued by the Office of Government Ethics. Participation in professional associations is encouraged; however, DoD is unable to reimburse employees for membership expenses per 5 U.S.C. 4109(b). A description of professional activities creditable under the Guidelines is found in the Continuous Learning Standards, Section V, Paragraph E of the USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning for the Defense Acquisition Workforce.

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Category	Creditable Activities	Point Credit (See Note 1)
Training:		
	DAU Certification Courses	10 Per CEU/See DAU Catalog
	DAU Continuing Acquisition Training	10 Per CEU/See DAU Catalog
	DAU Assignment Specific Courses	10 Per CEU/See DAU Catalog
	Other Continuing Acquisition Training	1 point per 60 minutes instruction
	Team Training	1 point per 60 minutes instruction
	Mentor Training	1 point per 60 minutes instruction
	Training with Industry (See Note 2)	1 point per 60 minutes instruction
	Management/Leadership Training	1 point per 60 minutes instruction
	Equivalency Exams	(See Note 3)
Education:		
	Quarter Hour	10 Per Quarter Hour
	Semester Hour	15 Per Semester Hour
	AA	10 (See Note 4)
	BS/BA	20 (See Note 4)
	MS/MA	30 (See Note 4)
	PhD	40 (See Note 4)
	Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 Per CEU
	Equivalency Exams	(See Note 3)
Experience:		
	On-the-Job Experiential Assignments	Maximum 40 points in 2 years
	Rotational/Broadening Assignments	Maximum 80 points in 2 years
	Experience with Industry (See Note 2)	Maximum 80 points in 2 years
	IPT/Special Project Team Member	Maximum 20 points in 2 years
	IPT/Special Project Team Leader	Maximum 20 points in 2 years
	Mentor	Maximum 10 points in 2 years
Professional Activities:		
	Professional Examination, License or Certificate, e.g., CPA, PE	10 to 30 points (See Note 5)
	Active Association Membership	5 points
	Teaching/Lecturing (See Note 6)	2 points for each hour of presentation; maximum 20 in 2 years
	Symposia/Conference Presentations (See Note 6)	2 points for each hour of presentation; maximum 20 in 2 years
	Workshop/Conference Attendance	1 point per 60 minutes of content; maximum 8 per day
	Publications:	(See Notes 6 and 7)
	Texts	25 to 40
	Technical Papers, Monographs, etc.	10 to 25
	Consulting (See Note 6)	10 to 25
	Patents	15 to 40 (See Note 5)
NOTES: 1. Minimum requirement is 80 points over two years. Documentation and verification are the responsibility of the employee and supervisor. 2. The Intergovernmental Personnel Act and DoD Directive 1000.17, "Detail of DoD Personnel to Duty Outside the Department of Defense," apply. 3. Equivalency exams taken in lieu of completing a DAU training course, or an academic course, may receive the same number of points that would be awarded for actual completion of the course. 4. Points for degrees may be credited in addition to quarter hour or semester-hour points, but only in the year in which the degree is awarded. 5. A professional license or a patent award may be counted only in the year initially received. 6. See Section V, Paragraphs D and E on pages 7 and 8 of this Policy for compliance requirements. 7. Publications may be credited only in the year published.		